

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)



DATE: 12 DECEMBER 2018

LEAD OFFICER: ZENA CURRY, AREA HIGHWAY MANAGER

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PETITION RECEIVED 05 SEPTEMBER 2018 FOR
 “REQUEST THAT LEATHERHEAD HIGH STREET BE OPEN
 FROM 3.30PM FOR PARKING AND ACCESS, 4.30PM ON
 MARKET DAYS, FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD OF SIX
 MONTHS, TO ENCOURAGE AN INCREASE IN FOOTFALL”**

DIVISION: LEATHERHEAD AND FETCHAM EAST

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

This report provides an update on the petition heard by the local committee on 5 September 2018, following the agreement by the Local Committee (Mole Valley) to ask officers to reconsider the proposal, and in discussion with the Chairman and the petitioners, what the way forward might be, in light of the strong views expressed by the committee, to introduce a trial period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the joint statement from Surrey County Council (SCC) Local Committee Chairman Mr Tim Hall and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Cabinet Member for Prosperity Councillor Simon Edge, as an update on the Petition (Annex 1). In particular to note the actions going forward.
- (ii) Note that a safety review, which considers all High Street users, to assess the risk of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, particularly for children, is to be carried out by SCC and is scheduled to be completed by March 2019.
- (iii) Note that SCC has commissioned a repair of the walling to the ramps at the foot of the High Street, to improve the visual impact of this feature. This will be the removal of the damaged tiles and replacing this tiling with new rendering. This will be funded 50:50 by SCC and MVDC, with MVDC applying public realm planning contributions, and is scheduled to be carried out in February 2019, subject to normal construction delays, weather conditions and reducing inconvenience to traders and High Street users. The timing of the works was the result of consultation with the market operator, Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce.

- (iv) Note that a further petition about Leatherhead High Street has been submitted to the 12 December 2018 Local Committee (Mole Valley) for consideration.
- (v) Agree that, following a review of the signs in Leatherhead, that SCC and MVDC will work together to put forward proposals for a new car park signing scheme, and existing direction signs in the town centre. Also, that MVDC and SCC will review existing Leatherhead gateway signs, identify approaches where no existing signs are, and to agree appropriate type, location and wording for any possible new signs. The Task Group and Committee will be updated following discussions between MVDC and SCC regarding the detailed proposals, funding streams and timings.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To propose measures to work with representatives of the Leatherhead Residents' Association and the Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce, in advance and alongside the Transform Leatherhead project.

1. <u>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:</u>

On 5 September 2018, the Local Committee heard a petition containing 99 signatures that requested that Leatherhead High Street be open from 3.30pm for parking and access, 4.30pm on market days, for an experimental period of six months, to encourage an increase in footfall.

1.1 Officers provided the following response:

The issue of vehicular access to High Street has been the subject of consultation and discussion for some time without any conclusions being reached. The Transform Leatherhead initiative is an opportunity to make long-term decisions on parking and access within the High Street in the context of the overall vision for the town and in the light of other projects taking shape under the Transform Leatherhead banner.

MVDC and SCC acknowledge that the High Street and the existing access arrangements are not easy to resolve. There are many competing issues in the High Street which need to be effectively balanced. The Transform Leatherhead (TL) project team are very sympathetic to the information provided in the petition and the reasons set out for proposing alterations to the existing arrangements.

There are a number of options that could be considered, however, of which the proposal put forward in this petition is one. All the options need to be considered in the light of current modelling of the highway network in the town and a clearer understanding of the economic and environmental impacts of each option. It is suggested that amending the Traffic Regulation Order, even though an Experimental Order, should await this further baseline work. MVDC has commissioned WSP to undertake traffic modelling of Leatherhead Gyratory and the wider highway network to test various options as part of the TL project. This work is due to be completed in December 2018 and it can be used to provide context in which to make any decisions about the High Street in line with the wider TL vision.

The TL team propose to extend the work already being carried out on the Swan Centre by commissioning an economic impact assessment of the High Street. This will cover the baseline conditions, engaging with local businesses and town centre users, reviewing case studies and literature and best practice elsewhere which will be compiled into a qualitative economic impact assessment. Subject to the procurement process we hope to have this information by 2019 to tie into the results of the traffic model and the longer term options work for the Swan Centre.

The TL team, in conjunction with SCC as the Highway Authority, are committed to reviewing the existing TRO which has been in place, unchanged since 2002 (no stopping TRO since 2006) when the baseline information has been collected. The review will also need to consider interrelated, practical issues from safety to on-street car parking and deliveries. We are also committed to undertaking public and stakeholder engagement which is critical before any changes occur to the access arrangements on the High Street.

In conclusion:

- An Experimental TRO in relation to parking on the High Street cannot be considered at this time
- The TL team are sympathetic to the proposed reasoning within the petition.
- There are several options that will need to be evaluated.
- Decisions need to be based on an understanding of the economic, environmental and traffic impacts, work on which has begun.
- There are a multitude of elements that need to be considered before any changes are carried out; safety, off street charging, stakeholder engagement, Swan Centre regeneration, disability access, servicing and delivery, public realm etc.
- Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken before any changes are carried out to the High Street operating arrangements.

2 **ANALYSIS:**

2.1 There was a Leatherhead Businesses Engagement Meeting on 16 October 2018, and the Transform Leatherhead Forum meeting on 17 October 2018, that raised several requests and concerns about traffic and parking in Leatherhead. These did however show a difference of opinion and polarising views as to what should be implemented to increase footfall and improve economic viability.

2.2 Numerous questions were received about parking and access arrangements for the High Street such as:

“The status of the High Street parking petition submitted to the Mole Valley Can there be free parking from 4.30pm to 6pm to encourage footfall? As Fetcham has free parking for 1 1/2 hours.”

“If parking is to continue in the High Street can we perhaps mark parking bays so cars are not blocking pedestrians or the road?”

“I am unhappy about car parking in the High Street which is supposed to be pedestrianised. For example: walking from the swan Centre car park to the theatre one is obliged to walk down the centre between parked cars with cars coming towards one or coming up behind - one feels very unsafe. What are plans for making the High Street safer in the evenings for pedestrians?”

“High St Parking - dangerous small amount for disabled. Comment please.”

“With regard to the Traffic Order, could a permanent one not be preceded by an experimental one? This would give both Highways and residents a chance to evaluate the scheme. 'Permanent' signs are often just covered with black plastic during the period. Only 6 tiny ones here and 1 big one at the entrance to the parking zone.”

“Why not have free parking from say 3.30 or 4pm to 6 when it is free anyway?”

“I strongly object to the opening of the High Street to cars at 3.30pm each day. It is a backward step. We should be moving towards a car free environment. It is dangerous on Sundays - there are no pavements so no safe places for pedestrians. Were people who are opposed to the plan invited to 16th Oct meeting to give a balanced view?”

“I understand the DfT's 'shared surface' worries are directed at new schemes in the course of construction not ancient highways like ours?”

- 2.3 A joint statement was issued from Surrey County Council (SCC) Local Committee Chairman Mr Tim Hall and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Cabinet Member for Prosperity Councillor Simon Edge, as an update on the Petition. (Annex 1).
- 2.4 It is important to ensure that the implications of the petition proposal are fully understood and evidence based before implementing any changes. It is acknowledged that there are strong and opposing opinions on changes to the parking in Leatherhead. There will be a full parking review across Mole Valley in the next financial year, with a new Parking Strategy from 2020. This petition proposal will be reviewed in more detail within that parking review, with information from a safety review of the proposal that is scheduled to be carried out by March 2019.
- 2.5 In broad terms, formalising parking on the High Street into marked bays would greatly reduce the available road and pavement width. This would also reduce the number of vehicles that could park on the High Street from approximately 50 down to approximately 20, which may not ultimately lead to increased footfall or economic viability of the High Street without a full detailed study to assess the impact of such a proposal. It would also affect the businesses that have licences for tables and chairs on the pavement which promotes footfall. For example, there is a tables and chair license for outside of the Weatherspoons that is valid until 4.30pm.
- 2.6 Officers will continue to assess the petition proposal, and this will be considered as part of the Transform Leatherhead High Street Feasibility Study, which is currently going through a tender process and will commence in January 2019.

3 <u>OPTIONS:</u>

- 3.1 The local committee can agree the proposed course of action, which is what officers recommend. Alternatively they could propose an alternative course of action, or to maintain the status quo.

4 CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 The Leatherhead Major Schemes Task Group have been consulted.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Funding has been identified for these recommendations.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 None arising from this report.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The recommendations respond to local concerns.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications.
Public Health	No significant implications

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to

- (i) Note the joint statement from Surrey County Council (SCC) Local Committee Chairman Mr Tim Hall and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Cabinet Member for Prosperity Councillor Simon Edge, as an update on the Petition (Annex 1). In particular to note the actions going forward.
- (ii) Note that a safety review, which considers all High Street users, to assess the risk of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, particularly for children, is to be carried out by SCC and is scheduled to be completed by March 2019.
- (iii) Note that SCC has commissioned a repair of the walling to the ramps at the foot of the High Street, to improve the visual impact of this feature. This will be the removal of the damaged tiles and replacing this tiling with new rendering. This will be funded 50:50 by SCC and MVDC, with MVDC applying public realm planning contributions, and is scheduled to be carried out in February 2019, subject to normal construction delays,

weather conditions and reducing inconvenience to traders and High Street users. The timing of the works was the result of consultation with the market operator, Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce.

- (iv) Note that a further petition about Leatherhead High Street has been submitted to the 12 December 2018 Local Committee (Mole Valley) for consideration.

Agree that, following a review of the signs in Leatherhead, that SCC and MVDC will work together to put forward proposals for a new car park signing scheme, and existing direction signs in the town centre. Also, that MVDC and SCC will review existing Leatherhead gateway signs, identify approaches where no existing signs are, and to agree appropriate type, location and wording for any possible new signs. The Task Group and Committee will be updated following discussions between MVDC and SCC regarding the detailed proposals, funding streams and timings.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The works commissioned to repair the walling to the ramps at the foot of the High Street, to improve the visual impact of this feature will be carried out in February 2019, subject to normal construction delays, weather conditions and reducing inconvenience to traders and High Street users. The Safety Review of the petition proposal will be carried out by March 2019.
- 10.2 Subject to approval by the Local Committee, the review of existing car park signs and proposals for new car park and direction signs in Leatherhead town centre could be identified and improved or removed. Also, MVDC and SCC will review existing Leatherhead gateway signs, identify approaches where no existing signs are, and to agree appropriate type, location and wording for any possible signs. The Task Group and Committee will be updated following discussions between MVDC and SCC regarding the detailed proposals, funding streams and timings.
- 10.3 The petition proposal will be considered in more detail, following the Safety Review, within the wider parking review for Mole Valley, the MVDC Parking Strategy, and the Transform Leatherhead High Street Feasibility Study which is currently being tendered by MVDC.

Contact Officer:

Stacey Capewell, Transport Strategy Project Manager, SCC and MVDC
Steve Clavey, Senior Engineer (Parking), SCC, contact: 0300 200 1003

ANNEX 1

It is important to ensure that the implications of the petition proposal are fully understood and evidence based before implementing any changes. The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently published a letter to Highway Authorities requiring them to put on hold any shared public space schemes where these include a level surface. This is to ensure that schemes are inclusive and accessible. This is clearly relevant to the proposals set out in the petition.

Officers have identified a number of other issues that must be assessed:

- *Safety Review:* SCC will undertake a safety review of the petition proposal to assess the risk of conflict with pedestrians; particularly with children. The review will consider recent guidance from the DfT which raises safety concerns for vulnerable users of 'shared spaces'. 'Seeability' on Highlands Road and other stakeholders not represented by the petition will be consulted. SCC has a duty of care to consider all highway users.
- *Congestion/obstruction:* Allowing parking to take place earlier could create obstruction issues for HGVs that are allowed to travel through the High Street after 4.30pm. Increased parking hours could also obstruct other vehicles that load/unload directly from the High Street, like bullion vehicles for the bank, which have to park close to the banks for security.
- *Causing confusion:* The proposed changes would result in larger signs, with information that would be different for different days, which could be confusing and as a result difficult to manage and enforce.
- *Process:* A notice of intent is required for experimental orders; however, SCC Parking officers consider that this would not sufficiently inform all those using the High Street of the changes and their impacts. As an experimental traffic order can be in effect for up to 18 months, SCC Parking officers recommend that in this case, the process for a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should apply. It would be more efficient and cost-effective to agree a proposal that works with the long term Transform Leatherhead initiatives, and to consult on this widely with all stakeholders.
- *Costs:* The cost of changing the restrictions, whether through an experimental or permanent TRO, is estimated as £10,000 - £25,000. This includes the cost of new signs, advertising, placing a notice in papers, and officer time. All repeater signs along the High Street would need to be replaced. Many are on shop fronts and walls that require legal permission to change at additional cost. If these can't be replaced new signs with posts along the High Street would be required.

Officers will continue to assess the proposal, and will be drawing up a project plan. The Local Committee will receive a further update in December 2018 and we will ensure continued communication with petitioners and other stakeholders throughout the process.

We look forward to working with you as we move forward, to promote Leatherhead as a vibrant, interesting and attractive place to work, shop and enjoy.

Tim Hall
SCC Local Committee Chairman

Simon Edge
MVDC Cabinet Member for Prosperity

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